

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** November 18, 2010

**Agenda Item:** Final Fishing Regulation Changes for 2011--Supplemental

**Division:** Fish and Wildlife (Fisheries)      **Action Needed:** Approval of Final Rule

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 10 minutes

### **Background**

All but two of the proposed fishing regulations for 2011 were voted on by the FWP Commission on Oct. 7. The two regulations included the proposal for a reduced bull trout bag limit and/or reduced number of lines on Lake Koocanusa and a proposal to raise the lake trout limits from 50 to 100 on Flathead Lake. At that recent commission meeting, FWP proposed to delay final action on the Koocanusa regulations until after bull trout redd surveys were conducted in October to better understand the population trajectory. The delay on the Flathead regulation was intended to allow the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (co-managers of the lake), with the opportunity to hold a public hearing on the issue and then be voted on by the Tribal Council on Oct. 20.

### **Public Involvement Process & Results**

The public comment period for the proposed regulation changes for 2011 was Aug. 6–Sept. 6. The proposed changes were posted on the FWP website and news releases were also issued from Helena and several regional offices. A total of 18 comments were received on the Flathead regulation and 16 comments on the Lake Koocanusa regulation. The comments were tallied in terms of their support or opposition to each proposed regulation, and these tallies, along with relevant arguments to support the various positions are included in the “Comments received on the proposed fishing regulation changes for 2011--Supplemental.”

### **Alternatives and Analysis**

The FWP response to public comments is provided in the “Comments received” document. These responses include a recommendation on whether to keep, modify or drop the proposal and a justification for each recommendation.

### **Agency Recommendation & Rationale**

FWP recommends reducing the bull trout bag limit on Lake Koocanusa from 2 to 1 (*or 0 depending on results of redd surveys*) due to the change in bull trout redds observed in the Kootenai River drainage above Libby Dam. The proposal to reduce the number of lines from 2 to 1 will be delayed until the 2012 fishing regulation cycle to allow for more time to discuss the options for reducing catch and release mortality with anglers. The proposal to raise the Flathead Lake lake trout bag limit remains unchanged, based on the stated need for this regulation and the approval granted by the Tribal Council (*if Tribal Council votes against this we may have to change this recommendation*).

### **Proposed Motion**

I move to adopt FWP’s proposed final regulation changes for the 2011 fishing season.